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POLICE DEPT.

HISTORY OF THE S.F. POLICE DEPT.

PREPARED BY THE PLANNING & RESEARCH BUREAU  
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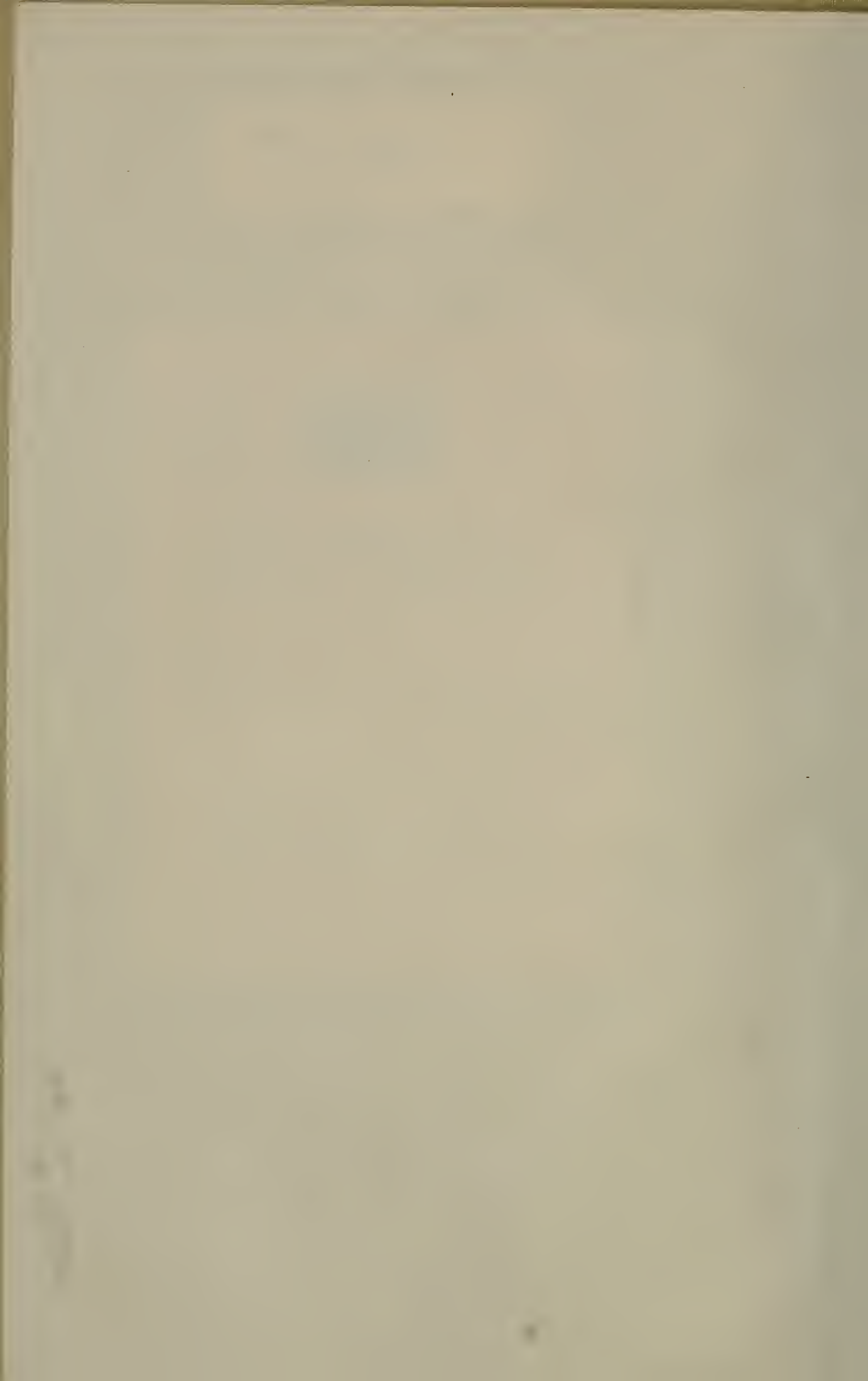
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# History

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CALIFORNIA HISTORY:

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Recorded California history had its' beginning in 1769 during the period of Spanish military control and the colonization by Father Junipero Serra and a small band of dedicated missionaries. In fact, many of the State's outstanding cities had been founded in the well knit plans for establishing Missions throughout the State; from the first, The Mission San Diego founded in 1769, to the last, The Mission San Francisco Solano founded in 1823. Each Mission was a cultural center but one days journey from the next, established at sites selected for their beauty and accessibility.

The hospitality of the Missions was widely known, for a traveler was well received and welcomed to remain at his pleasure-----never being asked from where he came nor his destination. Their hospitality was as infinite as the WORD they spread.

Mexico, embroiled in her own battle for independence, had revolted against and thrown off the yoke of Spanish rule. In 1822 possession of California was taken by a massed maneuver of Mexican military and naval forces concentrated at the Port of Monterey.

With the unsteadiness of a new government, Mexican control of California became more doubtful as the internal struggling of the Mexican Government spread.

In 1846 a small band of American patriots, headed by Captain Merritt, stepped boldly through the frantic grasps of France and England and raised the flag of the "California Republic" at Sonoma.

On July 7th of the same year formal possession of California, in the name of the United States, was taken by Commodore Sloat with the raising of "Old Glory" at Monterey. Two days thereafter, the incident was repeated in Portsmouth Square at San Francisco by Captain John Montgomery and seventy sailors and marines.

September 9, 1850 saw the culmination of a struggle for freedom and equality as the United States Congress admitted into the Union the 31st State..... California.

### SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY:

The beginning of what is now San Francisco was just being founded by the Spaniards when the Liberty Bell pealed the birth of our Nation. Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza selected the sites for the Presidio and Mission in March of 1776.

Early San Francisco was more village than city; a seaport that lay sprawling on the barren stretches of sand and rock, surrounded on three sides by water and known at this time as Yerba Buena.

On August 6, 1846 San Francisco's first peace officer, Navy Lieutenant Washington A. Bartlett, was appointed Alcalde. On September 15, 1846 Bartlett's appointment was confirmed by popular election. It was Bartlett who authored the edict declaring that henceforth from January 30, 1847 Yerba Buena would be known as San Francisco.

The first semblance of an organized department was in 1847 under the leadership of George Hyde. Hyde had been instructed to hold an election for the selection of six men to assist him in maintaining law and order in San Francisco whose population then stood at 459.



From this point on, the City of San Francisco and its' law enforcement agency began their fabulous growth, a growth that is unparalleled in historical annals of cities or nations.

On January 24, 1848 when gold was discovered in Sutter's millrace on the American River, and the evidence reached San Francisco's nearly 900 inhabitants, Sam Brannan, publisher of the town's newspaper, "The Star", led the first gold rush which left only seven inhabitants behind.

In 1849 the population had swelled to 5,000. The irresistible urge to find "golden fortunes" in California had spread to all corners of the globe and by 1850 San Francisco's population had reached the phenomenal sum of 30,000 persons.

The thousands of ships entering the port brought with them the adventure and fortune seekers, the deserters, and other castoffs seeking to ply their nefarious trades. Such were the frequenters of the now famous area known as the Barbary Coast. The city proper lay within the area bounded by Montgomery Street, Market Street, Broadway and Van Ness Avenue.

This great surge of unsavory characters into the city gave birth to a reckless and apparent lawless era which knew and feared such infamous gangs as the "Hounds" which roamed the city wantonly destroying both life and property.

The small core of law enforcers valiantly and desperately attempted to restrain these depredations. However, being many times outnumbered, they obviously lost ground. Evidencing San Francisco's noted spirit of unanimity, the citizens rallied to assist in ridding the city of this unwanted element.



On July 15, 1848 Samuel Brannan organized a meeting of the citizenry in Portsmouth Square to protest the racketeering of the "Hounds" who the day before had assaulted and killed Chilean immigrants who had refused to pay them tribute. Despite the attempt of the "Hounds" to break up the meeting, Brannan was able to organize the crowd in orderly regiments of 100. He then led them against the racketeers and at the end of the day 19 had been arrested and turned over to a hastily organized court. These men were tried, convicted and banished from the city and given to understand that if they would return they would be executed. The "Hounds" were never heard from again.

With the adoption of a City Charter in 1850, and the election of Colonel John W. Geary as San Francisco's first Mayor, the community rewarded the determination of the seven constables by increasing the force to 12 men. On May 1, 1850 Malachi Fallon, former keeper of the New York "Tombs", was appointed the first City Marshal.

The Committee of Vigilance was organized in San Francisco on June 9, 1851. On July 26, 1851, following the rampages of the Vigilantes in their assumption of police functions, the force was increased to 57 men, largely through the demands of Robert G. Crozier who had succeeded Marshal Fallon as Head of the Department. On June 18 of this same year we find San Francisco's first completely recorded complaint.

The year 1856 witnessed the abolition of the office of "City Marshal" as James F. Curtis, one-time leader of the Vigilantes, was installed as San Francisco's first Chief of Police. At this time, under the Consolidation Act, the City and County of San Francisco were made one and the same, with a police force that had been increased to some 150 men.

The following years were marked by the evolution of the department from a rather loose-knit unit to an efficient, well disciplined, semi-military force.

Martin J. Burke was Chief from 1858 to 1865. It was during Burke's term as Chief that a system of military drill formation of the police was inaugurated which could be assembled and used in case of riots or other emergencies. The Board of Supervisors at that time prescribed that regular officers on duty wear uniforms. Also, it was during this period that the San Francisco Police Department became the first department in the Nation to use photography in police work.

From 1865 to 1874 Patrick Crowley was Chief. At this time there were five stations, including the Harbor Police.

Theodore Cockrill succeeded Crowley until 1876 when Henry H. Ellis, a brilliant detective, became Chief.

During the bloody Kearney race riots, John Kilpatrick was Chief. In 1878, at a strength of 400 men, the San Francisco Police Department became the largest single police force in the West. In April of this same year, the office of Chief of Police ceased to be elective and became appointive.

In 1880 former Chief Crowley again filled the Chief of Police position.

In 1888 \$20,000.00 was appropriated for a police patrol wagon and signal system. The first signal box went into operation on November 27, 1890. Thus it was possible for the officer to call the patrol wagon by the police signal box and transport his prisoner by wagon instead of foot.



Isaiah W. Lees, internationally famous for his detective ability, became Chief in 1897.

With the turn of a new century, San Francisco was well on the way to her unrivaled pinnacle as the financial, cultural and recreational mecca of the world.

On February 13, 1900 William P. Sullivan was appointed Chief, followed in 1901 by George Wittman.

Jeremiah Dinan was Chief from 1905 to 1907. It was during his administration that the police car made its first appearance in San Francisco in the year 1906.

At 5:12 A.M. on April 18, 1906 San Francisco and its 350,000 population were rocked by an earthquake that registered an 8.25 Richter magnitude and lasted for a terrifying 48 seconds. After a 10 second pause, a second and equally devastating shock followed reducing buildings to mere piles of brick, granite and twisted steel; and bursting gas and water mains.

It was only through the quick acting of Chief Dinan that the police records were salvaged and protected in Portsmouth Square. When an occasional spark ignited the records, the fires were put out with confiscated beer ----- there being no water available due to the damage of the earthquake.

The damage caused by the earthquake was more than matched by the uncontrolled fires which raged for three days and nights. At the end of this holocaust, there were 452 dead, 1500 injured and 265,000 homeless ----- property damage was conservatively placed between \$350,000,000 and \$500,000,000.

The City Hall Station and City Prison, the North End Station, the Hall of Justice, the Southern Station and Police Stables at 4th and Clara, the Harbor Station and Stables, the Mission Station and Stables were all destroyed by the earthquake and fire. The police signal system was totally destroyed in the burned districts and badly damaged in other portions of the City by the fire following the earthquake.

On September 13, 1907 former Police Commissioner William J. Biggy was appointed Chief. Biggy's death remains one of the unsolved cases of the early century. Returning by launch from a meeting with Commissioner Hugo Kiel in Belvedere on the night of November 30, 1908, Biggy suddenly and mysteriously disappeared.

On December 26, 1908 Jesse B. Cook was selected to fill the position made vacant by Biggy's death. During Chief Cook's term the Fingerprint Identification System was installed and put into operation. Also, motorcycles came into use for the purpose of enforcing the traffic laws.

John B. Martin was appointed Chief following the resignation of Cook in January of 1910. In October of the same year, Martin resigned and Captain of Inspectors John Seymour was appointed Chief.

On June 15, 1911, following a period of political unrest, David A. White was selected as Seymour's successor. Unfortunately Seymour was not officially notified of White's appointment; thus for more than a week the department was under the leadership of two Chiefs of Police. Chief White was chosen from the business world and had had no previous police experience. He was a firm believer in complete and adequate records keeping and is generally recognized as the Father of this Department's modern records system. It was White who also ordered the closing of the notorious Barbary Coast in 1915.



In 1915 San Francisco was host to the Internationally attended Panama --- Pacific Exposition. In this same year, by a Charter Amendment, Katherine O'Connor, Kathlyn Sullivan and Katherine Eisenhart, later to be known as the "Three Kates", became the first Women Protective Officers of San Francisco, working under the Captain of Inspectors.

Daniel J. O'Brien, trusted Aide to White, was appointed Chief in 1920. One of the founders of the California Peace Officers Association and a constant advocate of a Federal Clearing House of Crime, Chief O'Brien personally assisted in the formation of the present F.B.I., contributing over 200,000 photographs and fingerprints from the criminal files of San Francisco.

Chief O'Brien realizing the importance of physical and routine police training, inaugurated another national first with the establishment of the Department Police Academy in 1923.

Also in 1923, a member of the Traffic Bureau was assigned to organize the Public School Traffic Reserve. In 1928 it was extended to the Parochial Schools and in 1931 officially designated as the School Traffic Patrol. By 1936 the School Traffic Patrol had become a nationwide program.

William J. Quinn, Chief Clerk to O'Brien, was appointed Chief following the retirement of Chief O'Brien in January of 1928. His administration also witnessed the drastic waterfront strike of 1934. The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, the largest in the world, and the Golden Gate Bridge, the largest single span in the world were opened to traffic in 1936 and 1937 respectively. Chief Quinn's tenure in office is exceeded only by former Chief Crowley who served a record 22 years.

Charles W. Dullea, well known for his accomplishments as an Inspector, was Chief from February 15, 1940 until October of 1947. Dullea won wide acclaim for his effective administration during World War II and the policing of the World Peace Conference in 1945. During 1945, at the request of the Federal Government, commissioned officers of the United States Military Services were trained in police organization and administration at the San Francisco Police Academy.

Upon the outbreak of World War II, it was conceivable that an attack might be made on the Pacific Coast. The Deputy Chief of Police was given orders to organize and train an Auxiliary Police Unit. A 36-hour course was given in police procedures, military drill, first aid, chemical warfare and bombs and firearms instruction. The unit was organized as a part of the Civilian Defense Corps. In 1944 the Auxiliary Police were reorganized into the Police Reserve. Their duties include policing the downtown area during congested hours and directing traffic during sporting events, public celebrations and parades.

Dullea was succeeded briefly by his Deputy Chief, Michael Riordan. On January 13, 1948 Michael Mitchell was appointed Chief. Mitchell was followed by Michael Gaffey from January 2, 1951 until November 16, 1955, during which time the Tenth Commemorative Sessions of the United Nations were held in San Francisco. George Healy was Chief for three months following the retirement of Chief Gaffey.

On February 1, 1956 Francis J. Ahern was appointed Chief of Police. He was formerly in charge of the Homicide Squad, had graduated from the Federal Bureau of Investigation Training School in Washington and served as a special investigator for



the Senate Crime Investigating Committee, headed by Senator Estes Kefauver. Chief Ahern's term of office was highlighted by a reorganization and rejuvenation of the San Francisco Police Department, with a corresponding rise in morale of the members of the Department.

In 1956 the Planning and Research Bureau was formed. This Bureau is directly responsible to and under the immediate supervision of the Chief of Police. The Unit is charged with the continuing study of the policies, procedures and operational problems of the Department and all phases of budgeting.

Also in 1956 there came into being the San Francisco Police Department's Intelligence Unit. This Unit is directly charged with the gathering, analyzing, recording and dissemination of information relating in any manner to organized crime and criminals. It is further charged with the investigation of persons or organizations whose activities are indicative or characteristic of organized crime.

In 1958, due to a national rise in crime, a program entitled Operation "S" was brought into existence. To ward off the crime increase, it was decided to form a special squad of men assigned primarily to combat crimes committed on the street, such as: Robberies, Aggravated Assaults, Purse Snatchings, Auto Thefts and Auto Boostings. The project was given the initial "S" and labeled Operation "S" standing for "Safe Streets through Selective Enforcement". Outstanding men of the Department were called from every assignment, divided into teams of two and assigned to operate in civilian clothes and in unmarked, radio equipped vehicles. Operation "S" is sent out on two unannounced nights a week from 7:00 P.M. to 3:00 A.M. The results of the Operation "S" program has greatly exceeded the initial expectation.

Chief Ahern passed away on September 1, 1958. On September 8, 1958 Thomas J. Cahill was appointed Chief of the San Francisco Police Department. Chief Cahill and Chief Ahern had worked closely together, first as partners in the Bureau of Inspector's Homicide Detail and again with the Kefauver Crime Committee where Chief Cahill conducted investigations for the Committee in most of the major crime centers throughout the country on the top mobsters and their organizations. He returned to the Homicide Division following his tour with the Committee and served in the Bureau until appointed Deputy Chief on February 1, 1956.

In addition to Chief Cahill's numerous duties as Chief of the San Francisco Police Department, he has served as Chairman of the Crime Prevention Committee of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Chairman of the Disaster-Mutual Aid Committee of the California State Peace Officers Association; is a member of the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee for the Governor and Attorney General of California, and is serving and has served on many other committees and advisory boards connected with and interested in law enforcement.

On April 1, 1958 the Central Warrant Bureau came into existence and was housed in Room 20 of the City Hall. Prior to the inception of the Central Warrant Bureau, individual traffic warrants were processed through City Hall by police personnel and were then distributed to the nine District Stations for service. This procedure entailed a great deal of bookkeeping, checking and accounting in order to place responsibility for the presence or absence of any particular warrant. The Central Warrant Bureau operation is keyed to the city-wide jurisdiction of all warrant personnel thus eliminating the tremendous records keeping task formerly performed in the processing of such warrants.



The San Francisco Police Department on September 6, 1961 moved into its new Hall of Justice. For the first time in a city of this size all the agencies relating to the Law Enforcement field were housed in one building. In addition to the police units, the new Hall of Justice also houses the Traffic, Municipal and Superior Criminal Courts, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender, Adult Probation, Coroner's Department and the Disaster Council Corps.

In 1962 in order to create a better understanding and closer relationship between the San Francisco Police Department and the community it serves, and promote greater public cooperation and liaison between the Police Department and the public, Chief Cahill organized a Community Relations Bureau. This unit is charged with establishing contact with organizations and groups within the community and holding meetings with these groups to promote the above stated objectives.

In the latter part of 1962, a Police Dog Patrol Unit was established composed of one Sergeant, six Officers and 7 dogs. To date this Unit has proven itself a valuable asset to the Department and has been expanded to its present total of twelve man-dog teams.

Under Chief Cahill's direction and in order to meet current demands for police service and provide a maximum crime deterrent force of uniformed officers in marked cars on constant patrol, the following programs were placed into effect:

1. Reassignment of all police officers performing clerical duties and replacement with civilians.
2. Inauguration of a report dictation system whereby officers phone reports to stenographers from the scene of the report taking.

3. The installation of a Parking Control Unit composed of Civilians for the enforcement of parking regulations.
4. Increasing the number of radio cars at the District Stations.
5. Modernization of the Police Radio Communications.
6. Consolidating units of the Bureau of Inspectors (Detective) to achieve a closer grouping of investigations of related crimes.
7. Improving the recruiting and selection process of the Department. (The selection and training program has, in the past eight years, undergone a tightening of selection standards and training procedures. During the last five years we show an acceptance rate of approximately one recruit for every twenty applicants.)

On January 13, 1964 Chief Thomas J. Cahill was re-appointed as Chief of the San Francisco Police Department.

In July of 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States, appointed Chief Cahill to serve as a member of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. This was a particular honor as Chief Cahill is the only Police Chief to so serve.

During the latter part of 1965, Chief Cahill created the Bureau of Complaint, Inspection & Welfare. The primary purpose of this unit is to investigate complaints made against members of the Department in general, and secondarily to inspect personnel and equipment.

During the same year, under the direction of Chief Cahill, the San Francisco Police Department entered the Auto-Statix Program. This program provides information relative to automobiles stolen, wanted, etc., throughout the State of California, and is part of a statewide network of major police jurisdictions and the California Highway Patrol. This is a computerized system which provides for instant information relative to automobiles.

The present authorized strength is 1,786 members in the San Francisco Police Department. Included in this figure are nine Policewomen. The approximate percentage of the various divisions throughout the Department are: Patrol Division - 57.7%; Inspectors Division - 18.9%; Traffic Division - 15.7%; and Headquarters Division - 8.1%. However, this does not include the 245 civilian clerks assigned to the Department.





